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hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphrodisiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two categories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha household depended on the energy of its members and on the proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

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231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.[8] In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals 262 the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even un- 673 knowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

[757] [8] There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

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854 pletely freely; sometimes, however, if it is sunny and the baby is sleeping the cloth will be pulled out over the baby's head so as to support the head more firmly against the body of the carrier.

For the first eighteen months or two years at the smallest reckoning the baby is continually carried when out of doors and is only put on the floor inside its own house. Unless the baby is a first or only child it should be able to walk slightly by about two years and should not need carrying after thirty months, if it is in good health. Of course if the children are ill they will be carried much later; and the youngest child, or an only child, is liable to be carried very much longer. When babies start to crawl they are usually laid somewhere near the mother while she is working, or near somebody else who can keep an eye on them. It occasionally happens that babies will crawl to the fire and burn or scald themselves; Aga's son was scalded and Chelim has a permanent scar from burning. It is, however, very seldom that crawlers get wounded in this way [171] among the Lepchas; among the Nepali Major Morris says that there is scarcely a grown-up who does not carry scars from childhood burns.

It is considered that the use of a cradle would be fatal to Lepcha children, and they are normally never used. There is, however, one exception to this rule; the family line of Mrs. Datoop have the custom of employing Nepali cradles (these are small cradles on rockers which can be carried); she herself was reared in one and reared all her children in them. She is the most independent, self-willed, and competent woman in Lingthem; of her three sons the eldest, Pembu, is exceptionally nervous, and the other two notably independent. The daughters, who have married back into their mother's community, I saw too little of to judge. Since there is only this one family, and since Mrs. Datoop is herself such a strong personality, it is quite impossible to decide whether the use of the cradle, with its somewhat greater freedom of movement and its slight restriction of contact with other bodies, had any influence on the formation of the characters of these rather exceptional people.

Except in the first few weeks of its life a child who is not an eldest or only child does not receive exclusive attention from its mother; the mother is the only woman who feeds it, but a great part of its time is usually spent in the company of elder siblings. [857] Children are more often carried by women than men; in a mixed family the elder daughters spend much more time looking after their younger siblings than their brothers do. If, however, the first child

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is a boy a great deal of the care of the next child will fall on him; Chimpet's parents accounted for his rather small stature by the fact that he had to carry his sister, two years younger than himself. This sister in her turn shared with her mother the care of the two baby girls; only when one was ill with chicken-pox, or when her mother wanted her help, did Chimpet have to act as nurse. Fathers often carry their children on their backs, especially if they are going a long journey; men nurse children, holding them in their arms or on their laps; but I never saw a baby tied on to the back of any man except their father, grandfather, or elder brother. Women on the other hand always appear willing to carry any baby, even if they are completely unrelated.

During the first few weeks the baby sleeps in its mother's arms; afterwards it is given its own mattress beside its mother, with the mother's breast always within reach. There has apparently never been a case of a mother overlaying her baby. During the first few weeks of a baby's life the parents copulate on the side and *a retro* but return fairly soon to the preferred prone position. It sometimes happens that when the baby becomes capable of movement it feels its parents' bodies and pats them while they are copulating. I have no leads as to what psychological effect, if any, this has on the children; even those older children and adults who remember lactating do not appear to remember feeling their parents copulating; I only heard about such behaviour from the parents of young children.

Children should not cry. If a child starts whimpering some attempt is usually made to find out why; if it is hungry or sleepy or uncomfortable an effort is made to gratify the desire it expresses. Should this be impossible somebody tries to distract the child's attention by waving something bright—a flower or a piece of paper—in front of it, and then giving it to the child to hold. Should this fail the baby is usually walked up and down, while the carrier gently taps its bottom; this treatment appears to be very soothing to Lepcha babies. If bigger babies cry they may be threatened that 'a Tibetan will come with his big bag to take you away, or with his dagger to kill you', and even if they do not understand the words, the tone of voice will frighten and hush it. Grown-ups and older children are quite unscrupulous in using bogies, in which they themselves do not believe, to quiet younger children. Only babies believe in the kidnapping or murdering foreigner, in the big bear round the corner, in the tiny Sang-rong *moong*.

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draws its knife in anger, if it tells lies or quarrels, it will be given a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. Boys are thought to be a little slower in learning than girls. A six-year-old girl should be an active help to her mother; boys at that age are still learning and aren't a real help to their fathers till a year or so later. When a child has acquired complete physical independence any signs of precociousness or adaptability which will make it more quickly a useful member of the household are looked for and encouraged. There are a number of household chores—particularly the fetching of water and firewood—which are considered specifically children's work; adults who have to do such jobs for themselves feel that they are slightly ill-used; it will be remembered that one of the reasons for childless people adopting a boy was to get somebody to do such work.[7] Children also do light work in the fields; a child can collect twigs and drop seeds as well as an adult.

As soon as children can talk properly adults stop using baby language to them; indeed young children are talked to very little, for it is not considered that they will be able to talk reasonably until they have lost their milk-teeth. At about the age of five children —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

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education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

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or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes.

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend.

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly.

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of

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dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it. Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

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come back from another direction, often beating a home-made drum or singing some Lepcha equivalent to 'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?' It may be remarked that a show of violence or a threatening gesture is always greeted with laughter by Lepcha children, whether made by an adult or another child; a cross voice on the other hand will quieten them at once and make them stop whatever they are engaged in.

There were some rather curious sidelights on these chasing situations. Chudo's four-year-old son was sadly torn between expectant pleasure and fear; he could see that his elders enjoyed being chased and rather felt he would like to be himself; he used to peep round obstacles at me and would invent errands for himself which would make him run quickly round me in a semicircle; but if I took any notice of his overtures and made a menacing gesture he would start to cry. Although he never got quite courageous enough to let himself be chased by me, he ended by having considerable confidence in me; and one day when he fell down and grazed himself he stopped crying as soon as I picked him up.

At the other end of the childhood range boys of fifteen and sixteen looked as though they would like to join in the game, but felt that their dignity should prevent them doing so. Patek, Ribu's elder brother, was particularly torn; he was seventeen, married, and, owing to the recent death of his father, the head of the household of six people, including two grandmothers; at the same time the desire to play was very evident and once or twice when there were no witnesses he joined in. Datoop's youngest son, aged sixteen and engaged, was in a similar state, but he yielded more often. On the whole the girls did not play much; the greater number of them were usually looking after a younger sibling and the girls tagged along with their mothers much more than the boys did. One girl, however, very much wanted to play. This was Prumtu, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Dunbi, and Tafoor's stepsister, who was afflicted with a very bad squint. This girl was the one really unhappy child in the village. Nobody liked her and she did not live at home but with her stepbrother, Tafoor, where she was a very unimportant portion of the large household. She had not yet been *asék*, partly because of her deformity and partly because she had the reputation of being lazy—*bla-bla-bla* as Chimpet said of her—and disobedient. She was a girl of singularly ungraceful and violent movement and was very rough; in play she would pinch people really hard and did not seem to distinguish between mock violence and real violence.

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857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 776 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

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MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING

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MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÉK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

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His sister was born when he was three. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth. He was very frightened at the birth, which he witnessed. He was told the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*, a devil the size of a small child who is especially used as a bogey to frighten children. He was weaned in two ways; first of all his mother's breasts were smeared with the new baby's excrement and secondly an aunt took him home, telling him that he must not cry because Sang-rong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him. For a week—he remembers clearly—he cried every night for his mother's breast and then resigned himself to do without. The aunt looked after him, sometimes taking him to her house, sometimes going to his and sleeping with him. She was his father's sister.

As a child he was, he considers, exceptionally timid. Most of his memories are to do with being bullied by older children; a cousin of his beating him for being disobedient when he was six or seven; two older boys ducking him and other small children in the stream, whereat they cried and the parents of the small boys came and beat the bullies. He also remembers sitting beside another small child and they threw mud and cinders at one another. He was carried by his mother or grandmother till he was five years old and remembers that vividly. He also remembers playing with other children at building bridges and making a house out of twigs and of once playing tug-of-war. His father gave him a little knife when he was quite young, he thinks before he was weaned. At the same time his mother gave him a haversack. Before he got the little knife he used to try to use grown-ups' knives. When his father gave him the knife he told him to be very careful—not to cut his friends or to use the knife on stones and so on.

He apparently cried easily and ran to his mother; he remembers crying and sucking at the same time whereat bystanders slapped him. Although he connects the birth of the younger sister with weaning he has always been very fond of her. His mother died when he was fifteen.

He knew about sexual intercourse when he was nine or ten but he was too timid to do anything when he played with girls and other boys. His first sexual experience was when he was fifteen with his elder brother's wife. His elder brother was away for the night and the wife called Jiroong to come and sleep with her. He took the invitation literally and went to sleep; but she forcibly seduced him. In this way she educated him and after that

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651 market rate is twenty, and two and a half when it rises to
655 forty rupees. The right to buy cardamoms throughout the state has been sold to certain specified contractors, who are responsible for collecting the above tax and handing it over as a lump sum to the Durbar office. The weighing of the crops is done in the presence of representatives of the state; but even so the system results in considerable hardship to the peasant. As is usually the case the man who does the work sees little of the profit. This question, however, will be discussed when we come to consider the question of debt.

651 When cattle are grazed in the forest their owners pay a tax
231 of two annas a month for each animal. Most of the oxen not required for ploughing remain up in the forest from February until about the middle of June. They are left entirely unattended and never stray. I have travelled a great deal in various parts of the Himalaya but in no other place have I seen cattle roaming about completely unattended. It was a most extraordinary sight to see them going out to graze in the mornings completely alone, returning again in the evening, and always in the same order. It is a common sight all over India to see small children out with the cattle or driving a flock of goats along the road. It is in many ways a good thing
857 and gives the child a sense of responsibility. But in Jongu one never sees it, and the children hang about in the fields all day or play around the house. The only time that cattle are watched is when it is known that a predatory animal is about. At such times a small boy will usually stay by them.

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and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook, and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the house. No arrangements have so far been made for her marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age. He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books. After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Uncle. - Analyst]

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159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in [868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them. [515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this [828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she [857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

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243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [78 888 857] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 533 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not 231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from 857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer 224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen, 868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attentio
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it ma
sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is
phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughl
translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; bu
apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wron
to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months ol
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or fou
months after which it commences to walk. Inside the hou
the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free wil
otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its le
straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-ha
years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When th
mother is working in the fields the baby remains in positio
on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully whi
being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one
● [857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwi
the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradl
are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby dow
it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; b
it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepc
child is much more carefully looked after than the corr
sponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurk
without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fi
as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst th
Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepc
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small childre
whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level
the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to tal
and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or fi
months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to spe
at the normal time. The speech of an average child, ho
ever, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to th
[98] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of whi

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [854] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its ●857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix I, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 — Analysis]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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25. Lepcha children starting for field work

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26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

858

858 STATUS OF CHILDREN--cultural definition of status periods and progression of statuses during infancy and childhood; rights, privileges, and powers of children (e.g., special exemptions); restrictions and disabilities of infants and children (e.g., special taboos); conception of legal minority; extent to which children are treated as inherently inferior or merely as inexperienced adults; stereotyped ideas about children (e.g., concepts of the good and the naughty child); differential expectations and treatment of children (e.g., according to age, sex), etc; See also:

Kin relationships 60
Guardianship 429
Age stratification 561
Marriageability of children 582
Family relationships 593
Legal liability 672
Juvenile courts 696
Special mortuary rites 766
Concept of legal majority 884

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755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Mun to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen*-ing, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[771] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. Children until they achieve complete physical independence are barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normal human span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones
775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is
751 employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an
[582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

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By the time a Lepcha baby is three it is already a recognisable member of its society, and the vast majority have the warm, sensuous, and fundamentally optimistic character which is typical of the Lepchas in later life. The child has an almost complete reliance on all the older members of its group; it has been trained physically and mentally to yield to its elders, who in their turn will gratify as quickly as possible all its expressed wishes. It has come to expect from the rest of the society a rather negligent and impersonal but consistent kindness; unpleasant sensations, and especially hunger, have been reduced to a minimum. Except under extraordinary circumstances a child is never alone nor is it allowed to cry without receiving attention. The training in cleanliness is not given any strong emotional importance, nor are any bodily functions in any way a subject for embarrassment or shocked shame; the impetus to restraint is chiefly social approval. The child receives very early a notion of fear from the voices and expressions of those around him; these fears are soon centred round certain words—devils, bears, tigers, snakes, Tibetans, strangers. But except for the accident of death, an unweaned child is unlikely to have undergone any obviously traumatic experience; the usually delayed weaning and birth of a younger sibling is likely to be the first really frightening experience. To my mind the chief formative influences in the earliest years of the life of a Lepcha child are firstly continuous physical satisfaction, secondly the learning of passivity, thirdly the impersonal attitude of the majority of parents, and finally the looking to elder siblings as much as, and even more than, to the parents for attention and help. The relying on elder siblings as though they were parents is certainly a major force in adult life. It is, I think, the habits and memories of this prolonged and satisfactory infancy which support the children through the less pleasant educative years of later childhood.

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In Lepcha an infant in arms is called *ing-ha*, a child that can walk *a-kup*. The word *ing-ha* is only used in this connection, but the word *a-kup* can be used as a suffix to any noun to indicate that the thing referred to is smaller than usual; a *ban kup* is a little knife, a *li kup* a little house. I think this linguistic point is of importance, as an indication of the attitude held by Lepchas towards children: they are *little adults*, and as such bound by adult rules; they are not,

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

as with us, almost a different species with their special 'childish' rules of conduct and ways of thought. It follows that—save perhaps individually in the immediate post-infancy period—childishness is not considered an excuse either for anti-social behaviour or for stupidity; a child is capable of committing crimes as much as an adult is, and may be punished as severely, though in different ways; and, judged by adult standards, their conversation is stupid and largely meaningless.

But although in one way adults regard children as potentially small adults, they have a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards them. Children are not quite human. If they survive they will turn into proper members of society; but if they die they will turn into particularly malevolent devils—num-een *moong*. There is no assurance of survival, either realistically or supernaturally; the horoscopes always hedge on this point: 'Should he survive his tenth day, his tenth month and his ninth year . . . he will live to be seventy-one.' A child who dies before about his tenth year is treated very differently to an adult; no funeral ceremonies are held for it and the body is thrown unceremoniously into the river; but elaborate apotropaic ceremonies are performed[5] to ward away its ghost-devil; and even should a child die at a distance these apotropaic ceremonies are performed, whereas for dead adults who die abroad no sort of funeral service is performed. The more attached a child was to his home and family, the more vigorously will his num-een *moong* attempt to reduce the other members to the same state as itself. Consequently a child represents potential supernatural danger. A dead infant turns into ing-bong *moong*, which is far less dangerous and much easier to get rid of.

The attitude of parents towards a child between the ages of about four and ten are therefore twofold: the child is a potential adult, but one in need of training and education to make him a socially valuable adult; at the same time the child is a potential source of supernatural danger, and as such it would be uneconomical to lavish too much affection on it. Should the child live it will be a great source of comfort and help; should it die it would be a source of great danger; the two contingencies must be taken into account. Finally, in the present a young child is often a nuisance and always an expense.

Some time between the child's third and fifth year—usually about the age of four—a child's achievement of physical indepen-

[5] See Chapter Thirteen, p. 352–353, also Chapter Eight, p. 233.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

dence will be formally recognised by its parents in a number of ways. In their earlier years children are fed from their parents' plates, the son usually eating from the mother's and the daughter from the father's. At about the age of four the child is given a plate and cup of its own, or, if it is not given a plate, will be given its food on a separate leaf to eat by itself. At the same time a child is also given its clothes and a piece of cloth; the mother gives it a small haversack which she has woven out of nettle cloth and the father gives a boy a small knife, a girl a small sickle. These articles are the absolute property of the child and he can, if he wishes, give them away. The young child is not censured if it breaks or loses the property, for it is very young, but if it persistently spoils or loses it the property is not replaced until it is older and wiser. The actual age on which the knife and sickle are given varies very considerably with the character of the child and the disposition of the parents; some children in their fourth year had already got these implements while others in their sixth year had not. Parents manifest no sort of anxiety lest their children should hurt themselves with these instruments; and I frequently saw adults lend children of five or six their own knives, which are nearly as long as a child's leg and are quite capable of killing a man. This confidence seems to be justified, for I never saw a child badly cut by a knife, though a couple of adults came to have their feet dressed after they had wounded themselves with a hatchet. The haversack plays an important part in the child's development; every morning the mother gives it some grain which it can nibble whenever it feels hungry; actual hunger seems to play very little part in the life of the Lepcha child. By the time it has got its haversack the Lepcha child has fully developed the habit of sharing and will always give some of its grain to anybody who asks for it, and indeed if it is eating will offer it without being asked. If I was talking to or playing with children of five or six they nearly always gave me a handful of popped corn or cold rice.

With this achievement of the signs of physical independence a child's conscious education begins. As far as manners are concerned the only consciously inculcated habit is that of receiving gifts with joined hands. Children have to learn to respect the bedding and sleeping places of their grandparents, but otherwise respect for older people is not verbally inculcated; children do not usually alter their behaviour in any way on account of the presence of elder people or people of importance; when they grow older

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draws its knife in anger, if it tells lies or quarrels, it will be given a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. Boys are thought to be a little slower in learning than girls. A six-year-old girl should be an active help to her mother; boys at that age are still learning and aren't a real help to their fathers till a year or so later. When a child has acquired complete physical independence any signs of precociousness or adaptability which will make it more quickly a useful member of the household are looked for and encouraged. There are a number of household chores—particularly the fetching of water and firewood—which are considered specifically children's work; adults who have to do such jobs for themselves feel that they are slightly ill-used; it will be remembered that one of the reasons for childless people adopting a boy was to get somebody to do such work.[7] Children also do light work in the fields; a child can collect twigs and drop seeds as well as an adult.

As soon as children can talk properly adults stop using baby language to them; indeed young children are talked to very little, for it is not considered that they will be able to talk reasonably until they have lost their milk-teeth. At about the age of five children —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

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869 copy their elders in prostrating themselves in front of the images of the lamaist gods, whether these gods are in the monastery or private houses.

858 The Lepchas are very explicit about their aims in the education of their children. Children fall into two categories—*ko-chet*, or good, and *ta-né*, or naughty. These terms are only applied to children and are clearly defined. 'A good child (*ko-chet*) will help its parents in the fields and in the house; will tell the truth and own up if it is charged with wrong-doing; will listen carefully to its elders and learn what they teach him; will help old people and will be peaceable. A bad child (*tané*) will tell lies and quarrel and insult people; if it is reproved it will draw its knife in anger and won't own up; it will take other people's property, and not do its proper share of the work.'

A child is not placed into one of these two categories early, for they are final and not temporary qualifications. The character of a young child is considered malleable, and the early years are used to evoke the *ko-chet* qualities and destroy the *tané* ones; a child is only called *tané* when it appears that education has failed. There is considerable variation of opinion as to when judgement can be finally made; some consider that a child's character is fixed at the age of eight, others that it will not completely manifest itself till the child is married; the general consensus of opinion is, however, that a child will fall into one of the two categories by the age of ten. Whatever age is chosen, it is believed that at that time, the child's character, previously vague and undetermined, is finally fixed and will not later be modified.

A child which may, if great care is not taken, later become *tané* is indicated in its earlier childhood by several characteristic traits; if it hacks at the house and door when it is given its knife, if it cries because it is scolded or because something is taken away from it which might be harmful or which does not belong to it, if it uses abusive language, these are all signs that the parents must be especially watchful. It is the parents' duty to eradicate such inborn naughtiness. A child's companions are also considered to be of great importance: 'Good companions will make a good child, bad companions a naughty one.' It is believed that excessive spoiling and indulgence by both parents may warp a child's character, but not irremediably.

If a child is not good by about the age of ten there is very little hope for it. The experiment may be tried of sending it away to be

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reared by strangers, but this is seldom successful. This course was tried with a boy from Lungdeum and also with Katel's eldest son; but both boys ran away and wandered all over the place, Katel's son finally dying young in foreign parts. The only person in Lingthem who was really *tané*—a quarreller and a thief—was Sangkyar, who is a cretinous defective.

V

When a child stops being a baby and becomes a young Lepcha the world becomes a more difficult place for him. Instead of being treated with a rather impersonal kindness, he is now treated with a rather impersonal neglect. He has the compensation of adult equipment—the knife and haversack which are the outward sign of physical independence—but he is also judged by adult standards; he is capable of committing adult crimes, and has to show that he possesses the adult virtues. By negative standards the children form a group; the younger ones leave the baby group to become trained to be adults; the elder ones are by their increased knowledge and initiative more and more accepted into the group of full-grown adults, as they become more self-supporting—it is considered that at the age of twelve boys and girls should be capable of doing the full work of a man or woman—and marriage arrangements are made for them. The children are not in opposition to the adults; they are not as a group ill-treated, though possibly individuals may be, except for the occasional blows they may get if they are a nuisance; they are provided with plenty of food as before; and, except for only children, or children of the very poorest parents, they have an animal or so and a little piece of ground as their private property.[8] Full adult status is a goal they have to work towards; they see this goal and the greater number of children are very anxious to grow up. This is particularly true of the boys, who have to wait longer before they can be considered fully adult; the girls attain psychological maturity much earlier, for by the age of twelve they are considered to be at their most beautiful and are usually *asék*'d; and even earlier they may become sexually conscious and realise that because of their sex they have a quality which makes them important and desirable to adults. It is only temperamentally or socially maladjusted children who appear to be oppressed by the neglect and occasional harsh treatment which is part of their

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 108.

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education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

591 unhappy in their own; near paternal relations usually live in the same house, and maternal relations generally live far away. If, however, there is living in the neighbourhood a maternal grandfather or married aunt children can always go and pay them short visits. Thus Chimpet, who was not very happy at home and who was rather neglected in favour of the numerous younger children, used to go fairly frequently to visit his maternal grandfather, the Lharibu Chujen at the next village of Panung; sometimes he would go by invitation, either alone or with other members of his family, and at other times he would run away there of his own accord for a few days; no comment was raised if he did so. There are, however, very few children who have such an alternative home.

152 Only and adopted children are often very lonely, but except for these it is I think extremely rare for a child to be actively unhappy at home. The girl Prumtu was the only really unhappy child in Lingthem; after her perhaps came Chélé, who has been discussed earlier;[9] he lived alone with his old grandfather and a distantly related middle-aged woman. Besides Chélé, Pursang, Chano's second son who was for so long suckled by his aunt, occasionally threatens suicide; he has no obvious reasons for being unhappy but he is a rather difficult character, and shows some signs of turning into a bad boy, a *tané*.

858 For the majority of Lepchas childhood is not an actively unhappy time, but a time of obscurity, of being unimportant; children are not taken much notice of and their tastes are little consulted. But most of the children realise, though perhaps they would not enunciate it so clearly as their parents, that the obscurity and occasional harshness of these earlier years are a necessary preliminary and training for the wholly desirable goal of full adult status.

[9] See Chapter Six, p. 164–165.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the
[848] case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
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